NAPNAP Statement on Fostering Child Health and Wellness During COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 worldwide pandemic is affecting all of us. While children, as a population group, are less directly affected than adults, they and their families are being directly and indirectly impacted daily – whether it be economically, educationally, socially, psychologically and spiritually.

As pediatric-focused advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), our focus is working with children and their families to ensure all children are able to grow and develop, despite their circumstance. The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners is committed to optimizing child and family health in times of wellness, as well as crisis.

Our association and expert members have developed and curated resources to provide guidance during the pandemic. You can access tools and presentations on our Coronavirus Safety Page.

Recommendations for Families:

• Support children as they ask questions about the pandemic. In addition to the information on our webpage regarding helping children and teens cope with stressful events, uncertainty and anxiety, The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offer parents and caregivers guidance on how to communicate with children. You can also contact your pediatric healthcare provider for advice.
• Continue to monitor your child’s health and wellbeing. If you notice changes in mood, activity level or diet, do not hesitate to contact your child’s healthcare provider.
• Make in-person or telehealth primary care appointments to maintain your child’s well visit and immunization schedule, monitor acute conditions and receive guidance and necessary screenings. Pediatric practices are taking all possible precautions to protect your family. Call ahead to learn how your provider is implementing social distancing, masks and other efforts to decrease exposures.

Recommendations for Healthcare Providers:

• Increase phone triage services and patient understanding and use of telehealth visits.
• Design office space and procedures to support social distancing with pediatric patients in mind. Use developmentally appropriate words to ensure that children understand the need for masks and other PPE.
  o Increase access to hand washing/hand sanitizing stations.
  o Provide masks to children/families if needed.
  o Ensure PPE is available for all staff.
• Heighten awareness of mental health resources/crisis intervention techniques for effective intervention and/or referral.
• Refer patient families to reputable resources (e.g. local health department, CDC, NAPNAP, AAP, NCTSN) for questions about the pandemic or other health issues.
• Actively outreach to remind families about upcoming well child and follow-up visits, and provide information about changes in office procedures.
• Consider participating in research studies, contact tracing and, when available, administration of a vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

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